

- **Nell Quesenbery Report**

**Claiborne County (TN) Progress**

**November 11, 1982**

**THE BLUEBERRY PICKING**

**By Nell Quesenbery**

*“And the earth brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after His kind, and the tree yielding fruit whose seed was in its self after His kind: and God saw that it was good.” --Genesis 1:12*

The large dark berries were strange. All summer, ripely blue, they had hung in heavy clusters on their tall erect plants.

Mary Williams, who had given me the seed, said not to pick the berries until there had been at least two hard frosts.

Lillian Carr also watched her berries grow from seeds I'd sent her back in the winter. Lillian called me to tell me how well she liked the berries from which she had made delicious pies.

Finding these new berries neither sweet nor sour, I asked Lillian what kind of berries they really were.

“I don't know just what these berries are like,” said Lillian. “They don't imitate a huckleberry. Huckleberries are smaller, sweet to the taste and grow on bushes. They don't imitate a northern blueberry, but I like them. If I'm able, I plan to save my seed and raise more next year.”

Jack picked berries from our three short rows, while I both canned and packaged them for the freezer.

Yet, after picking all we wanted, we could not estimate how many gallons of the berries were still in the garden.

Blanche Crawford, who works at WNTT radio station, is a great believer in collecting and saving her own seeds for planting. I wanted Blanche to try these new berries. She made a cobbler pie, which she liked. Blanche set aside a few berries to dry and save for seed.

Ida Jennings, who will be 92 on December 1, 1982, walks daily to the Lone Mountain Grocery Store. With her short gray curls and gay smile, she is very beautiful. Merrily, she took some blueberries, saying, "I've never tasted blueberry pie. I'll enjoy making the pie."

When I was a child, Ben and Margaret Hatfield's family lived in the house where I now live. Daily, I would visit the large, wonderfully gentle and generous family. I gave their daughter, Sandy Campbell, some blueberries.

Sandy gave me a recipe for "*One Cup Cobbler.*"

*1 cup sugar*

*1 cup milk*

*1 cup flour (self-rising)*

*1 cup butter*

*1 pint of hot fruit (sweetened to taste)*

*Stir together sugar and flour, cut in butter; add cup of milk. Pour dough into baking dish, pour in hot fruit. Batter will rise to the top. Bake until brown.*

Imogene Rose says her granddaughter, Amy Reece, likes blueberries. She plans to bake pies for the family.

October 15, 1982. The Claiborne Progress celebrated its 95th birthday. A very fine group of people staff the Progress office. They are: Otis Amory, Mark Green, Judy Ely, Kathy Coffey, Edith Collingsworth, Mike Humfleet, Lou Lambert, Wanda Long and Lil Thompson.

Sometimes, different treats are brought into the office to be shared by all the staff members. I gave Lou Lambert enough berries to make pies for her co-workers.

Betty Manning was in a mad whirl at the election commission office, getting ready for the November 2, 1982, elections. However, she was pleased with the berries and seeds I gave her and sent to her mother, Ruby (Mrs. Wilson) Hurst.

Helen Lakins came and picked berries. Her husband, Dexter, raised those wonderful Crimson Sweet watermelons this past summer.

Mary Payne, who, after her fall, still uses a cane, brought Johnny Payne's wife, Jackie, to help her pick berries.

Patty Smith's husband, Billy Wayne, picked her berries. Patty's father, Haynes Chumley, said these berries were not like the northern blueberry, which is smaller and sweet to the taste.

During the weekdays, Haynes Chumley, a coal hauler for the mines, lives high on the mountain in Paintsville, Kentucky. Sometimes, in his small camper, Haynes has only bears and snakes for company. In the summer, Haynes plans to plant these new berries in his mountain garden.

Lois Bunch Justice brought home a new baby girl she named Fallon. Due to a cancer, the doctors wished to terminate Lois' pregnancy. At the risk of her life, Lois refused. I visited the new baby and brought Lois blueberries. Lois undergoes cancer surgery December 2, 1982. Lois, you are a very brave young woman. Good luck!

My parents, Dennis and Louise Marchio, had a few plants growing in their garden. Irene Bargo picked some berries from their garden. Barney and Irene Bargo are very kind people. Irene, one of the world's finest cooks, often brings Dad pastry.

Grover Smith, who lives halfway down Greasy Hollow, near Robertson's Store in Powell Valley, couldn't come to Lone Mountain to pick berries. I sent Grover some berries for seed through the mail.

Doshie Lee Caskey and her daughter, Kim Ann, picked berries to can. Doshie, who is awfully kind to the elderly and sick, is now helping Pearl Williams, who has had a stroke.

Jack's sisters Jean Cheatham and Jenny Phelps came by to visit and pick berries. Jenny brought us some of her homemade molasses.

A very special thank you to Helen Payne, who is a fine hand at turning out culinary delights. Helen was the last person to pick berries, since she was quite busy during the weekend. Among other things, Pauline Robinson Perkins had invited her to the Methodist Church dinner.

Anyway, Helen gave me two pictures that she greatly valued. One was a picture of my great grandfather, James Randolph (Judge) Yoakum. Judge Yoakum was Helen's great uncle. My grandmother, Bessie Yoakum, in a long white middie dress, very beautifully and very sweetly smiled out of the other picture. Posed with my grandmother, Bessie, were Albert Shumate, Ed Shumate and their wives.

Gladys Davis and Elsie Baltrip, among others, were too busy to come pick berries. Others like Zora Loop, A. Evans and Bertha Lawson, didn't answer their phone.

If any Progress readers want a few berries for seed, call 626-3250 or write Nell Quesenbery, P.O. Box 185, Lone Mountain, Tennessee 37773.

This Halloween night of 1982, only twenty percent of the usual Halloween trick-or-treaters came to our door. With the large full moon shadowing the cedars and tall shedding trees and the weather warm, it was the most perfect Halloween night I ever remember. And the saddest.

The children were scared because of the long deadly fingers of the "Tylenol Murderer." It could prove foolhardy to travel too far abroad this night, for there may be other sinister "copycat" murderers lurking about.

My mother, the next morning, was talking about how peaceful the law officials kept our county.

Mom asked if I remembered going to Avon Hall, where Dr. Miller lived, and being given an orange.

Those oranges, Halloween 1941, the blind doctor passed out were the first treats anyone had ever passed out in Lone Mountain. That was just before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, forty-one years ago. I was five.

Halloween grew after that.

All through my girlhood, on Halloween night, I brought heavy bags of treats home.

Later, it was a sight how much candy our son, Jackie, would bring home. My son and I have enjoyed so many nice Halloween nights of trick-or-treating, I feel I want to help the oncoming generations of children celebrate this “fun” holiday. I hope this custom won’t have to end.

Ed Shumate is home from the hospital. Ed will be 93 next July. He is really a fine-looking man.

NOTE: After I wrote this article about blueberries, I talked to Bobby Jennings (Mrs. Paul), who is over seventy years old. She looked at the berries and said they were called Ground Huckleberries, that she had seen them planted by a family almost fifty years ago.

Euna Evans, where for the past several years we’ve bought our milk, butter and eggs, made a cobbler with her berries. Euna, the daughter of the late Preacher Kelly Harrell, said the cobbler tastes like old-time huckleberry cobbler. She liked the berries and plans to save seed.